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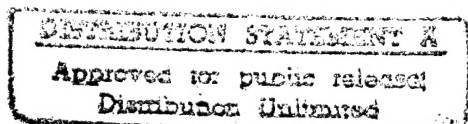
DUAL KEY COMMAND AND CONTROL IN OPERATION DENY FLIGHT:  
PARALYZED BY DESIGN

by

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.



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## ABSTRACT

Operation Deny Flight's parallel command had difficulty authorizing the use of force. This impaired NATO's ability to fulfill its three primary missions:

- 1) enforcing a no-fly zone,
- 2) providing close air support to protect UNPROFOR, and
- 3) conducting airstrikes to protect threatened U.N.-declared safe areas.

Each of these three missions required the timely application of airpower. The timely authorization to use that force was impeded by slow decisions, poor delegation of authority, and conflicting objectives.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The most publicized mission of Operation Deny Flight (ODF) was the enforcement of the No-Fly Zone (NFZ) over Bosnia-Herzegovina. The NFZ, however, was only one of three assigned missions. The other two missions were to:

provide Close Air Support (CAS) to UN troops on the ground at the request of, and controlled by, United Nations (U.N.) forces under the provisions of U.N. Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 836, 958 and 981,

and

conduct, after request by and in coordination with the U.N., approved air strikes against designated targets threatening the security of the U.N.-declared safe areas.<sup>1</sup>

When analyzing command and control in ODF, it is critical that these two additional missions are not overlooked because, *by definition*, they required the use of airpower for destructive force. As such, they are just as important as the NFZ in demonstrating how the parallel chain of command and the dual key requirement stymied the use of force during ODF.

## **BACKGROUND**

Operation Deny Flight was conducted from 12 April 1993 to 20 December 1995, at which time the international Implementation Force (IFOR) assumed responsibilities for the implementation of military aspects of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina. The operation utilized North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air power to enforce UNSCRs in support of the U.N. peace effort in Bosnia-

Herzegovina.

The operation used a parallel chain whereby NATO retained operational command of its forces while coordinating with UNPROFOR and the U.N.. This command arrangement did not provide a central authority; instead, a "dual key" control system for the use of air power was adopted. Approval for the use of air power remained with the U.N. Secretary General in New York, although operational control would be delegated to appropriate subordinate commanders on the ground.<sup>2</sup> The Secretary General could request and authorize, but not order the use of NATO air power in support of U.N. security council resolutions.

### **COMMAND AND CONTROL**

***Command and Control: The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities and procedures employed by an operational commander in conducting campaigns and major operations in the accomplishment of the mission.***

Joint Pub 1-02: Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms

ODF was a multinational peacekeeping operation initiated in response to hostilities in former Yugoslavia. This multinational operation was structured as an established alliance, NATO, supporting a larger U.N. coalition peacekeeping effort. This composition presented obvious challenges, however, there were several ingredients which contributed to making it a potential success:

- \* An established NATO command and control system with over 40 years of training and experience.

- \* Shared basic military doctrine, procedures and command and control arrangements between Nato and UNPROFOR; a result of a NATO's sizeable contribution of forces to UNPROFOR.<sup>1</sup>
- \* Extensive liaison between NATO and UNPROFOR, including an exchange of representatives between 5th Allied Tactical Air Force (5ATAF), UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb and UNPROFOR Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC).<sup>3</sup>
- \* Coordination between the NATO Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at 5ATAF headquarters and the U.N. Air Operations Control Center (AOCC) at Kiseljac.<sup>4</sup>
- \* State-of-the-art surveillance and command and control aircraft, including over 66 % of NATO and 40 % of the USAF AWACS and EC-130E Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center (ABCCC) aircraft.<sup>5</sup>
- \* Inter-operability exercises, such as practice CAS missions flown in Bosnia-Herzegovina with UNPROFOR Forward Air Controllers (FACs) controlling NATO aircraft.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, as commendable as these efforts were to optimize the "arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities and procedures," they did not focus on the key vulnerability of the parallel chain of command: the decision making process.

### **TIMELY AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF FORCE**

Each of ODF's three missions required the timely application of air power:

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<sup>1</sup> The majority of the command and staff structure of UNPROFOR were provided by NATO nations, e.g. the headquarters of Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC) was formed from core elements of NATO's Northern Army Group.

- \* Aircraft violating the NFZ needed to be prosecuted before they could commit a hostile act.
- \* A request from UNPROFOR for close air support meant their forces were under attack.
- \* The requisite for air strikes was that U.N.-designated safe areas were threatened.

Despite the implied urgency, the use of force was constrained: prior consent was required from both NATO and the U.N.. For instance, NATO aircraft enforcing the NFZ had to seek permission prior to intercepting or engaging targets.<sup>7</sup> Since this consent came via parallel chains of command, ODF's command and control required good connectivity, rapid communications, rapid decision making, and agreement to use force. While good connectivity and rapid communications were achieved through technology and procedures, rapid decisions and agreement to use force did not come so easily.

### **CONNECTIVITY, SPEED AND DECISION**

ODF's CAS procedures provide an excellent example of how connectivity, and rapid communications can be diminished by a decision process. If UNPROFOR forces on the ground in Bosnia-Herzegovina came under attack, they would radio the U.N. AOCC in Kiseljak. The AOCC would relay the request to UNPROFOR headquarters in ZAGREB, who in turn would seek approval from the Secretary General in New York. Once approval was received, the AOCC would coordinate with the NATO

CAOC and the EC-130E ABCCC aircraft flying in the theater of operations.<sup>2</sup> The ABCCC would then direct NATO CAS aircraft onto the target area and pass control of them over to the FAC.<sup>8</sup>

Justifiably, there were significant concerns about how well the system would work in a crisis, e.g. sometimes the FACs could not transmit to BHC because of mountains terrain. This was overcome by using ABCCC aircraft to relay and provide an air-to-ground interface.<sup>9</sup>

Such adaptability and coordination between NATO and the U.N. provided reasonable assurance about connectivity and timely communications, however, there was underlying concern about the possible delay in receiving clearance approval from the U.N. Secretary General (UNSYG). Just three months after ODF began, Walter B. Slocombe, the United States Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, wrote the following to the Senate Armed Services Committee regarding the authorization to use force in ODF:

We have no way of knowing, of course, how long the Secretary General might choose to deliberate before rendering his decision. The UNSYG's decision-making process, not NATO/UNPROFOR command and control procedures, is the "long pole in the tent".<sup>10</sup>

In deference to Under Secretary Slocombe, the decision-making process *was* part of command and control since it provided the *authority to act*.

On 12 March 1994 ODF's command arrangement for CAS received its first test

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<sup>2</sup> Nato approval for the use of force had been delegated to the CAOC.



when a team of French peacekeepers came under attack by Bosnian-Serb artillery fire. US aircraft were overhead waiting for clearance to provide the requested CAS. NATO was quickly informed, recognized the need for action and one half of the "dual key" process had been satisfied. Unfortunately, it took several hours before permission was received from the U.N. Secretary General to attack the threat with CAS aircraft, by which time the tank was long gone.<sup>11</sup>

Recognizing the futility of such a delay, the U.N. Secretary General delegated executive authority to his appointed Special Representative to Former Yugoslavia, Yaukai Akashi, to approve the use of CAS.<sup>12</sup> To further expedite approval, the Secretary General also authorized Special Representative Akashi to delegate the use of CAS in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the UNPROFOR Commander.<sup>13</sup> Once the U.N. delegated to this level, the decision to act came in a matter of minutes rather than hours.<sup>14</sup>

### **DISAGREEMENT ON USE OF FORCE**

*The successful partnership that has developed between NATO and UNPROFOR during the past year has of course not come about without the resolution of a number of conceptual differences which existed at the outset between the two organizations.*

Lt Gen Sir Michael Rose, Commander BHC

The key conceptual difference between NATO and the U.N. was the use of force. During ODF's 33 months, NATO flew over 100,000 sorties, but only 4 Galebs were shot down, eight CAS missions were performed and ten strikes were conducted.<sup>15</sup> The number of sorties where NATO actually expended ordnance

executing its three primary missions was surprisingly low relative to the numerous opportunities where air power *could* have been used. Action was often preempted by disagreement between NATO and the U.N. on the use of force.

In 1994, General John Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, testified before a House National Security Committee hearing as to how disagreement between NATO and the U.N. had a negative impact on the effectiveness of ODF. NATO officials complained that their hands were tied in dealing with the missile threats in Bosnia-Herzegovina because U.N. officials vetoed most plans to bomb the sites threatening ODF aircraft. The U.N.'s motive for vetoing the plans to bomb was the fear that U.N. peacekeepers would be harmed in retaliation.<sup>16</sup> The U.N. solution was to avoid the threat envelopes and, consequently, NATO air planes were not allowed to fly in areas of known Bosnian-Serb air defenses.<sup>17</sup> The inability to fly through a significant portion of the country limited NATO's ability to effectively enforce the NFZ.

### **DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES**

While General Rose cited conceptual differences, the disagreement on the use of force between NATO and the U.N. was due as much to a difference of perspective. NATO believed it had three clearly defined missions: enforce a NFZ, protect UNPROFOR with CAS, and conduct strikes to protect U.N. designated safe areas. NATO committed significant aircraft, personnel, and equipment for sustained operations on the premise it would actually conduct these missions. In reality, these

missions were not so clearly defined because the U.N. did not share the same willingness to use of force.

The U.N. had legitimate reasons for not wanting to use force to the same extent as NATO. Enforcement of the NFZ, especially with respect to helicopters, posed a risk of shooting down non-combatants.<sup>3</sup> Because UNPROFOR personnel had to call for CAS missions, they risked being seen as "party to the conflict". This perception that UNPROFOR had "chosen sides" hindered UNPROFOR's ability to negotiate cease fires and risked making their personnel targets. Air strikes risked retaliation against UNPROFOR for NATO actions, e.g. UNPROFOR personnel were used as "human shields to deter attacks on potential targets".<sup>18</sup> While both NATO and the U.N. had valid arguments for using or not using force, the lack of agreement demonstrated a lack of unity of effort. Since there was no controlling authority, there was no means within the parallel chain to resolve this lack of unity.

### **UNITY OF PURPOSE**

*The glue that binds the multinational force is agreement, however tenuous, on common goals and objectives.*

Considerations for Multinational Operations, Joint Pub 3-0

Unity of effort for multinational operations is achieved through common goals and objectives. Since NATO and the U.N. demonstrated a lack of unity of effort, the objectives of ODF must be questioned.

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<sup>3</sup> The difficulty of determining the presence of non-combatants on helicopters led to the almost complete disregard for helicopters in the NFZ.

Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali emphasized that UNPROFOR's mission was not to end the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina or to "fight on one side in the war". Its objectives were:

to assist in providing humanitarian aid; contain the conflict by imposing constraints on the belligerents through safe areas and exclusion and "no-fly" zones; and negotiate local cease-fires and other measures aimed at achieving an overall political settlement.<sup>19</sup>

ODF's missions were intended to contain the conflict, however, it could be argued that the NFZ and safe areas were not the proper sequence of actions to produce the desired political settlement. The means chosen to contain the conflict may actually have impeded the political settlement. Additionally, NATO's efforts to "impose constraints on belligerents" by enforcing the NFZ and protecting safe areas actually jeopardized the safety of U.N. personnel conducting humanitarian aid. Consequently, the simple fact that NATO's role in ODF was in direct support of UNSCRs did not necessarily mean that NATO and the U.N. shared unity of purpose. When objectives conflicted, the parallel chain provided the U.N. the means to veto the use of force. In this case, the parallel chain caused command gridlock.

### **THE ULTIMATUM**

One mechanism which demonstrated the ability to circumvent the dual key system's problems using force was the issue of an ultimatum to enforce an exclusion zone. In February 1994, NATO and the U.N. issued an ultimatum in response to a Bosnian-Serb threat against Sarajevo; All heavy weapons not removed from a 20km

Total Exclusion Zone (TEZ) around Sarajevo or turned over to UNPROFOR by 2400 GMT 10 February 1994 would be destroyed by NATO air strikes. Bosnian-Serbs responded by the deadline, UNPROFOR considered the conditions met and no strikes were launched.<sup>20</sup> The TEZ-combination was similarly effective in protecting Gorazde in April 1994.<sup>21</sup>

In this situation, the decision to use force was not time-critical because it was *made in advance*. Risk to UNPROFOR personnel was reduced because they had the opportunity to evacuate the area or seek protection.<sup>4</sup> These conditions made the decision-making process easier.<sup>5</sup>

### **BEYOND DENY FLIGHT: IFOR**

Before IFOR assumed responsibilities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the U.N. Secretary General recommended the U.N. withdraw and turn Bosnian operations over to NATO.<sup>22</sup> While the reason for the proposed withdrawal was cited as a lack of resources, the effect would have been to terminate the dual key arrangement and allow for a clear commanding authority.

The United States remained firm in its position not to send ground forces to Bosnia-Herzegovina without a peace settlement and did not do so until after the Dayton Accord.<sup>23</sup> Forces were not committed until there was reasonable assurance of their

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<sup>4</sup> Arguably, the deadline could have provided an opportunity for belligerents to take hostages to deter the attack, however, this did not happen in this instance.

<sup>5</sup> It is acknowledged that this is not a panacea. The parallel chain must still decide to use force in the planning of the exclusion zone. If belligerents believe there is a lack of resolve to actually use force by the peacekeepers, the ultimatum loses its deterrent quality.

safety. Additionally, President Clinton emphasized his willingness to meet force with force, "...and then some," in his December 1995 televised address to the nation.

IFOR's mission is less than two months old. IFOR's success is not assured, however, it does at least enjoy a more favorable command arrangement for decision-making than ODF if it must decide to use force. That arrangement includes a more unified command authority, some resolve of conflicting objectives, and conviction to use necessary force from the outset.

### CONCLUSIONS

NATO and UNPROFOR's dual key process was too complex. It is a credit to NATO and the U.N. that they were able to sufficiently arrange technology and procedures to make this command arrangement work. When it did not work, it was not the lack of connectivity, but rather the result of slow decision-making and lack of consensus.

The U.N.'s insufficient delegation of authority to use force slowed the authorization of force. Since ODF's missions were time-critical, the requirement to receive clearance from higher echelons to use force endangered those people ODF was supposed to protect.

The U.N.'s military means to contain hostilities conflicted with its other two objectives; providing humanitarian aid, and cultivating an overall political settlement. As a result, NATO's missions conflicted with the U.N.'s objectives. The properly designated NATO commander for ODF did not have authority to use force without

U.N. agreement. Disagreements ensued because NATO's justification for the need to use force was as legitimate as the U.N.'s justification to prevent that use. The dual key system had no single commanding authority to overcome this stalemate.

The heavy weapons exclusion zones were effective in Bosnia-Herzegovina because dual key approval to use force was made in advance as part of a planned decision and was not a reaction. NATO and the U.N. had time to negotiate the conditions for the use of force, resolve differences and make a decision well prior to any military action. The ultimatum and deadline were appealing because of their deterrent qualities and opportunity for the U.N. to reduce risks. Specifically, after the decision was made, there was time available to warn belligerents, as well as personnel supporting peace efforts, of the impending use of force.

Although in its infancy, IFOR's command arrangement appears to have resolved some of the difficulties which confronted ODF's parallel chain: unity of command, conflicting objectives, and disparate willingness to use force.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

The lessons learned from ODF concerning the dual key system and its effects on the use of force are applicable to future multi-national peacekeeping missions and not exclusive to air operations:

1) *Command arrangements for multi-national peacekeeping operations must provide a speedy decision process.* The most rapid communications and reliable

procedures are overcome by a delay in decision.

2) *If a parallel chain uses a dual key system to authorize the use of force, that authority must be properly delegated.* The logical incentive for the use of force by peacekeepers is impending or actual hostilities. The peacekeepers' response to hostilities is time-critical. A parallel chain without properly delegated authority does not provide the necessary freedom to act in time-critical situations.

3) *A dual key system is made impotent by conflicting objectives.* Further, the use of force as the means to achieve one objective in a peacekeeping operation may conflict with other objectives.

4) *Exclusion zones with ultimatums for non-compliance can be a useful peacekeeping tool, even for a dual key command arrangement flawed by slow decision and lack of delegation.* The decision to use force, even if it is arrived at after much time and negotiation, is made during the planning process, it is proactive instead of reactive. Therefore, the amount of time it takes to decide to use force to implement an exclusion zone is not as critical as it is in response to hostilities.



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